



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204

Reply to
Attn. of:

SP 94-C-36

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Subject:

Homeless Shelters in the Special Milk Program

To:

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS
(Special Nutrition Programs)

- Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,
Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming ED

Eligibility of Institutions to Participate as School Food Authorities: Although homeless shelters are not specifically named as eligible institutions in Section 3 (a)(1) of the Child Nutrition Act, the Agency holds that they do qualify to participate in the Special Milk Program (SMP) under the definition of "settlement house", which is named in the Act. Private, nonprofit institutions operating such shelters are not required to establish that they are licensed to provide residential child care services, as is necessary for such institutions which operate the National School Lunch Program or School Lunch Program.

Eligibility of Homeless Shelters to Participate as Sites: Eligible shelters must meet the criteria established under the definitions provided in the Summer Food Service Program regulations for homeless feeding sites: "a feeding site whose primary purpose is to provide shelter and one or more regularly scheduled meal service per day to homeless families and which is not a residential child care institution...." They may engage in other activities unrelated to the care and training of children and the presence of adults will not necessarily exclude a program or activity from participation in the SMP if the program or activity is identifiable as being conducted for children. Further, as with any other institution or organization participating in the SMP, homeless shelters may not participate in any other Child Nutrition Program.

Eligibility of Children in Homeless Shelters to be Claimed for Free Milk Reimbursement: Institutions participating in the SMP may operate pricing or nonpricing programs. In order to receive the maximum reimbursement, an institution must operate a pricing program and, in addition, it must make a determination of eligibility for each child who is eligible for free milk. Normally, eligibility is determined through the submission of an application form by the child's household which then is evaluated by officials of the institution according to income and other guidelines to see if the child is eligible. However, in order to assist the homeless and the agencies which serve them, the Agency makes these modifications to the standard procedures for eligibility determination and documentation in homeless shelters:

1. Income eligibility—Agency policy with regard to the eligibility of homeless children is that the child's status as being homeless (i.e. residing in the shelter) is a sufficient basis for considering that his or her household meets free income eligibility guidelines.

2. Documentation—It is not necessary for homeless shelters to take individual applications for each child in the shelter. Instead, homeless shelters may keep updated lists of all participating children. The list must contain the following information for each child who is residing in the shelter:

- * Child's name
- * Effective date of entry into the shelter
- * Date of departure from the shelter
- * Signature of determining official

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Ann C. Hector

ANN C. HECTOR
Regional Director
Special Nutrition Programs